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I, LEANNE MYNOTT, TEAM LEADER EXAMINATION SUPPORT AND SALES hereby certify that annexed is a true copy of the Provisional specification in connection with Application No. PP9969 for a patent by SIMPLE PURCHASING NETWORKS (SPN) PTY LTD filed on 23 April 1999.

WITNESS my hand this
Eleventh day of May 2000

LEANNE MYNOTT
TEAM LEADER EXAMINATION
SUPPORT AND SALES

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AUSTRALIA
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PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION
FOR A PROVISIONAL PATENT

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Invention Title: **Computer Program**

The following statement is a description of this invention

This invention relates to computerised systems for matching buyers and sellers of goods or services or both. More particularly it relates to a system which in preferred forms enables a prospective purchaser to place a single order or request for quotation with a centralised location and for the centralised location to
5   provide the prospective purchaser with quotations from one or more suppliers which represent the best available price.

With the increasing popularity and accessibility of the Internet, many companies have made their catalogue of products or services available on the Internet. Many have also provide on-line shopping systems whereby a purchaser may peruse
10   items in the vendor's on-line catalogue and place an order electronically. However, this is functionally the equivalent of perusing a paper catalogue, selecting items and then placing an order. If one wishes to obtain the best price and/or availability for an item or items, it is still necessary to look at each vendor's electronic catalogue, select items and compare availability and prices.

15   A system has been proposed in which a prospective purchaser sends an order or request for quotation(s) to a central location. Based on criteria entered by the purchaser and/or suppliers, the order is passed to suppliers who meet the specified criteria. Those suppliers then prepare a quotation for the entire order and return it directly to the prospective purchaser or to the central location for
20   forwarding to the prospective purchaser. Whilst such a system results in rapid provision of quotations, the purchaser must still review each quotation to determine the best price. Further, there is no provision for splitting of a single request for quotation.

In the present invention, in one form, a central location has a database of goods
25   and/or services available, suppliers, supplier prices and registered purchasers. A purchaser places an order or a request for a quotation with the central location for one or more items. The purchaser may specify a supplier or may request a "best price" from all the suppliers. The supplier(s) may be specified before or after item selection. The central database is searched for the best price for each item and a
30   list of items, suppliers and prices is returned to the prospective purchaser which represents the best price for all the specified items.

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Summary of the Invention

In one broad form the invention provides a computerised method for processing orders including:

5
storing a master list of items, each of which represents a product or service;

storing supplier details;

storing item sale terms for at least one of the items for at least one of the suppliers;

10
extracting an available item sublist from the master list based on item selection criteria;

selecting desired items from the item sublist and providing desired quantities of said selected items;

15
selecting at least one supplier for each of the desired items based on supplier selection criteria, wherein said supplier selection criteria includes at least one of the following:

1) purchaser supplied criteria;

2) criteria extracted from item sale terms.

The invention also provides a system for computerised processing of orders, the system including:

20
storage means for storing

a master list of items, each item representing a product or service;
supplier details;
item sales terms for at least one of the items for at least one of the suppliers;
25
purchaser details, and
purchaser terms for at least one of the purchasers for at least one of the suppliers;

receiving means for receiving a purchaser identifier uniquely corresponding to one of the purchasers stored on the storage means;

item selection criteria generating means for generating item selection criteria

extraction means for extracting an item sublist from the master list based on the generated item selection criteria;

5   display means for displaying said item sublist to said purchaser;

input means for selecting one or more desired items on the item sublist and for specifying desired quantities of said selected items;

supplier selection criteria generating means for generating supplier selection criteria:

10   supplier selection means for receiving said desired item information and respective desired quantity information and said supplier selection criteria for selecting at least one supplier for each of the desired items, based on supplier selection criteria, said desired item information and respective desired quantity information,

15   wherein said supplier selection criteria includes at least one of the following:

       1) purchaser supplied criteria;

       2) criteria obtained from the stored item sales terms.

The item sale terms may include whether a particular supplier supplies the
20 respective item, price levels, stock levels and other information such as freight charges, geographic limitations on supply, etc.

The item selection criteria may return all available items, whether in stock or not.

Purchaser details and purchaser terms for at least some of the stored purchasers for at least some of the stored vendors may also be stored and used as selection
25 criteria for items and/or suppliers.

The purchaser terms for each vendor/purchaser combination may include whether the supplier will supply the purchaser, minimum orders, freight charges, sales terms, price bands, etc.

The item selection criteria may further include restrictions retrieved from the purchaser's purchase terms so as to restrict the items on the available item sublist to those items available from suppliers who have indicated that they will supply the particular purchaser.

5   The supplier selection criteria may include restrictions retrieved from the purchaser terms. Preferably, the supplier selection criteria result in the selected supplier for a desired item being the supplier with the lowest price per unit of the item. The price may be the base price or it may be an effective price after allowing for freight, available discounts, bonuses, etc.

10   Where the supplier selection criteria includes purchaser supplied criteria, this may be a restriction to select a specific supplier, two or more suppliers, suppliers from geographic locations, delivery times, if this is provided for by the supplier's terms, etc.

The purchaser supplied criteria may also include criteria to obtain quotations from
15   two or more suppliers for all items on the desired item list supplied by the respective supplier.

The invention also provides an on-line system which provides primary data to multiple users, the system including:

        user identity means for storing user identity information relating to each of
20   said users, at least part of which uniquely identifies each user from the other users;

        primary data supply means for supplying one or more users with primary data;

        secondary data selection criteria generating means for generating
25   secondary data selection criteria for at least one user;

        secondary data supply means for receiving said secondary data selection criteria and for optionally supplying one or more of the users with secondary data concurrently or sequentially with the primary data;

        recording means for recording data relating to the actions of at least one of
30   the users supplied with said secondary data in the on-line system and for recording data relating to what secondary data was supplied to the or each of said respective users;

wherein said secondary data selection criteria includes information relating to the user identity information.

The invention also provides a method of obtaining information on users of an on-line system which provides primary data to users, the method including:

5   uniquely identifying users of the system with a unique identifier;

obtaining additional information relating to at least some of the users;

selecting and providing secondary data to users of the system concurrently or sequentially with the primary data;

10   recording information relating to actions of the users supplied with secondary data and information relating to what secondary data was supplied to each respective user;

wherein the secondary data supplied to each user is selected at least in part using the unique identifier and/or at least part of said additional information.

15 The system is preferably an on-line ordering system. The system may have multiple suppliers of goods and supplier details may be recorded in the system.

Where supplier information is stored, preferably the secondary data supplied to each user is selected utilising the supplier information. For example, all users whose address is within NSW may be provided with an advert relating to a
20 supplier in Brisbane, if the Brisbane supplier wishes to increase its out of State sales.

The invention shall be better understood from a non-limiting description of preferred forms of the invention and the drawings, in which:

Figure 1 schematically represents the database and network of the present
25 invention.

Figure 2 is a flow diagram of the steps involved in the system.

Figure 3 is a screen shot of a supplier's item term form.

Figure 4 is a supplier's purchaser profile form.

Figure 5 is a screen shot of a purchaser's supplier selection form.

5

Figure 6 is a screen shot of a purchaser's item entry form.

Figure 7 is a purchaser's order summary form, showing multiple orders.

Referring to the drawings a central location has a database 10 which includes a master list of all items offered for sale 12 through the system, details of registered
5 suppliers 14, details of registered purchasers 16, details 18 of which items on the master are supplied by each of the registered suppliers and the supplier's price or prices for the items and details 10 of purchasers to whom suppliers will supply goods to. Purchasers and suppliers access the database via a network, indicated at 13. In the preferred form suppliers 14 select whether to supply or not to supply
10 each of the registered purchasers 16. However, it is within the scope of the invention for suppliers 14 to select whether to supply specific items to a purchaser. It is also within the scope of the invention for the system to include a generic "new purchaser", to which suppliers may choose to supply to or not.

The administration of the system compiles the master list 12 of items which it
15 intends to make available through the system.

Referring to Figures 1 and 3, the administrator 8 has entered basic details 22 of each item and has provided the ability to have three separate prices per item. These are Price A, Price B and Price C. Each supplier 14 may view each item and enter its own product code 24 and prices per unit at 26, 28 and 30. The price
20 to the purchaser ultimately depends on global criteria set by the administrator and/or specific criteria set by the specific supplier, as will be discussed further. For instance, the administrator may charge a flat "processing fee" for each master order. These supplier/item details may be viewed and updated by the respective supplier.

25 Prospective purchasers 16 register and provide details such as company name, address and contact details 30. These details 30 are then made available to all suppliers via a supplier/purchaser term form, shown at Figure 4. Each supplier may review each potential purchaser and specify whether to supply the purchaser or not, at 32. The supplier may specify one or more price structures at 34,
30 minimum order value 36, delivery charge 38 and payment terms 40, such as COD and a customer number 42. These details are also stored in the central database. It will be appreciated that other details may be recorded and that, if desired, supply on an item by item basis to a particular customer can be specified.

For registered purchasers, on logging on to the system (which identifies the purchaser) a query is run which presents a list of available suppliers to the specific purchaser, shown in Figure 5. Only those suppliers who have chosen to supply the purchaser are shown. The system allows for "competitive" ordering
5 and/or "direct" ordering, which will be discussed later.

The list of available suppliers is grouped by each broad category of goods derived from a query based on the purchaser's details and available suppliers. Suppliers who have chosen not to supply that particular purchaser are preferably not displayed.

10 Referring to Figure 5, the supplier selection screen is divided into "competitive liquor" 50, "competitive dry goods" 52, combined "beer" 54 and "direct ordering" 56 sections. The sections displayed depend on the items selected by the relevant suppliers. The "direct ordering" section includes all suppliers appearing in the other sections.

15 At this point the purchaser may choose one or more quotation paths, as detailed below.

Competitive

For each competitive category, suppliers available to the particular purchaser for the relevant group of items are displayed. The purchaser may select one or more
20 of the suppliers using the "tick" boxes. In Figure 5 four potential suppliers of liquor are shown but only three are selected. In practice one would expect all suppliers to be selected in a competitive order.

A list of available items is then presented to the purchaser, without identification of the potential suppliers. If desired the list of items may be further divided by
25 category to present manageable lists. For example, supplies for hotels may be divided into non-alcoholic beverages, white wines, red wines, beer, liquor, etc. Further sub-categories may be provided as needed.

The list or list of goods available depends on what items are supplied by the suppliers, whether the suppliers have chosen to supply to the specific purchaser
30 and whether the purchaser has selected the supplier at the selection screen.

Referring to Figure 6, the purchaser selects items 64 and unit or case quantities 68,66 and delivery requirements 70. The quantities may be case or unit

quantities. Since the price per unit depends on the available supplier's price and other criteria such as location, freight charges, etc., no price is shown.

As seen in Figure 6, the purchaser is in a screen showing liquors, which have been further divided into sub-groups, such as "Aperitifs and Bitters" 72 and
5 Bourbon 74. These sub-groups are derived from the sub-category field of the product information, shown in Figure 3.

Once the purchaser has completed the selection of items and quantities, the selection is sent to the central database and the database program selects and sorts each item so the purchaser obtains the best price per item and/or the best
10 price for the entire order. A supplier may provide a low price per item but only on total orders over a certain value or quantity. The system may be enabled to calculate the best order total as well as the best item price, particularly if delivery charges are included.

Since only those items available from the selected suppliers will be displayed it is
15 inherent that the purchaser will obtain prices for all desired items, even if only one supplier supplies one of the required items.

The system then returns this information to the purchaser for review and acceptance or rejection at Figure 7.

The information regarding a purchaser's various sent orders and pending
20 quotations is shown in Figure 7. This information is preferably stored on the central database and may be viewed by various categories and each order or sub-order may be expanded in detail by clicking on the relevant order. For recurring orders the purchaser may save details of the desired items on its local computer, or on the central database, so that orders/selected suppliers may be
25 easily placed without the need to again select items and/or suppliers.

Referring to Figure 7, there are shown a number of orders and pending quotations, 80, ordered by date 82. The status of the order/quotation is indicated by the tick or cross in the sent column 84. Placed orders are marked by a tick and pending quotations by a cross. As can be seen, each sub order 86 has its own
30 status and each individual sub order may be accepted independently of other sub orders in the master order. The third master order 88 includes two sub orders 90, 92 of which sub order 90 has been placed whilst order 92 has not been placed.

The returned information screen provides the purchaser with the ability to "drill down" to view details of each sub order and to input order numbers 94 for each supplier sub-order, as well as a master purchaser order number. Upon acceptance of the order or sub orders by the purchaser, this acceptance

5 information is returned to the central database, which processes the order and generates final sub-order forms, one for each supplier with an appropriate list of items to be supplied by that supplier. Preferably the central database allocates supplier order numbers and returns the completed sub-order information to the purchaser.

10 Direct

In the case of a direct ordering, the purchaser selects one or more of the available suppliers. The selection of suppliers for a "direct" order is independent of any "competitive" order. As seen in Figure 5 the supplier, Australian Independent Wholesalers has been selected at 58 for a direct order but not for a

15 competitive dry goods order at 60. A further supplier - Concept Amenities 62 is also displayed and selected and is one which supplies goods in a category not shown on the screen.

When all desired "direct" suppliers have been selected, this information is returned to the central database. The database software obtains a list of available

20 goods from all of the selected suppliers and an item selection screen similar to that shown in Figure 6 is presented. It is to be remembered that at the initial item selection stage all items available to the purchaser are made available for selection, irrespective of the supplier and availability. The selection of items is then returned to the database which compiles separate quotations for each of the

25 selected "direct suppliers". Since any one supplier may not supply all the desired items, unavailable goods need to be marked.

The central database then returns order/quotation information to the purchaser for confirmation/amendment/rejection, etc., together with a list of unavailable items. In the example shown in Figure 5, at least eight direct suppliers have been

30 selected, so at least eight complete and/or incomplete quotations will be returned to the purchaser. As with the competitive ordering system, there is provision for each order to be allocated a purchaser's order number, etc,. Upon acceptance of one or more of these quotations, this information is returned, supplier order numbers allocated and the completed order information returned to the purchaser

35 and sent to the supplier.

In the preferred embodiment the purchaser is provided with a list of available suppliers, selects those suppliers and the order type, ie., direct or competitive. The purchaser is then presented with a list of items available from those suppliers. As an alternative, the purchaser may be provided with a list of items
5   before selecting suppliers.

For the purchaser, once they have registered and been selected by one or more suppliers, on logging on to the system, a list of available items is presented to the purchaser, without identification of the potential suppliers. The list of items available depends on what items are supplied by the suppliers and whether the
10 suppliers have chosen to supply to the specific purchaser.

Once the items and quantities required have been selected, the purchaser proceeds to a supplier selection screen similar to that shown in Figure 5. A list of available suppliers for each broad category of goods is provided, again derived from a query based on the purchaser's details, the items requested and available
15 suppliers. Suppliers who have chosen not to supply to that particular purchaser are preferably not displayed. Similarly, those who have chosen to supply to the particular purchaser but who do not supply any of the items requested would also preferably not be displayed.

At this point the purchaser may choose one or more quotation paths, as detailed
20 below.

Competitive

For each competitive category, suppliers available to the particular purchaser for the items selected are displayed in a similar manner to that shown in Figure 5. The purchaser may select one or more of the suppliers again using the "tick"
25 boxes.

This selection is sent to the central database and the database program selects and sorts each item so the purchaser obtains the best price per item and/or the best price for the entire order. A supplier may provide a low price per item but only on total orders over a certain value. The system may be enabled to calculate
30 the best order total as well as the best item price, particularly if delivery charges are included.

Since only those suppliers who have items available are available for selection, it is inherent that if all suppliers are selected, the purchaser will obtain prices for all

10

desired items. Since an item may only be available from a supplier who is not selected at the supplier selection stage, it is possible for a selected item to be unavailable from the selected suppliers and there is provision for unavailable items to be so marked

5 The system then returns this information to the purchaser for review and acceptance or rejection as per Figure 7.

Direct

Selection of "direct" suppliers is also made using a screen similar to Figure 5.

When all desired "direct" suppliers have been selected, this information is
10 returned to the central database. For each supplier the database obtains a list of available goods and unavailable goods for that supplier/purchaser/item combination. It is to be remembered that at the initial item selection stage all items available to the purchaser are made available for selection, irrespective of the particular supplier.

15 The central database then returns order/quotation information for each selected "direct" supplier to the purchaser for confirmation/amendment/rejection, etc., together with a list of items from each supplier unavailable. The acceptance/ rejection and subsequent ordering is as previously described.

The invention includes within its scope the ability for a master purchaser to
20 represent a group of sub-purchasers to increase the buying power of the group. Each master purchaser would be entered in the central database with multiple "child" sub-purchasers, together with details of those sub-purchasers. When compiling an order, the master purchaser can specify who the true sub-purchaser is to enable delivery directly to the relevant sub-purchasers.

25 The system also includes within its scope an option for suppliers to obtain automatic feedback from known purchasers using the system. For example, a supplier may select one or more particular purchasers to target. Whenever the purchaser logs onto the system, an advertisement referring to that supplier is presented to the customer. The supplier can get information - perhaps in the
30 form of a graph - of that particular customer's buying pattern with the supplier, with an indication of the change which may have occurred when the customer was targeted. Consequently, the supplier is given feedback as to

11

the effectiveness of targeting the purchaser and how the purchaser's buying patten with the supplier has changed.

It will be appreciated that many modifications and variations may be made to the embodiment described herein by those skilled in the art without departing from

5 the spirit or scope of the invention.

Dated this 23rd day of April, 1999

SIMPLE PURCHASING NETWORKS

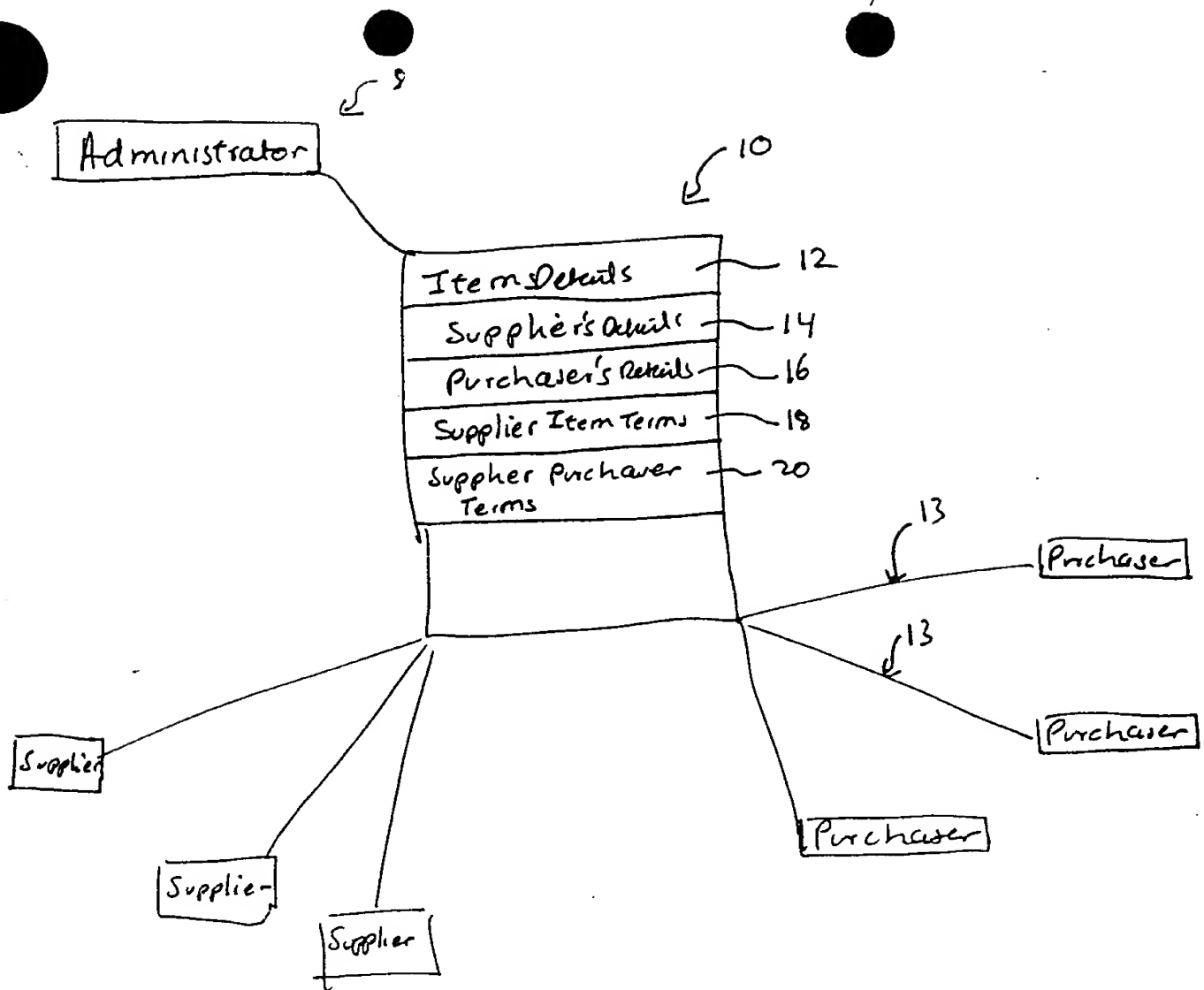By its Patent Attorneys
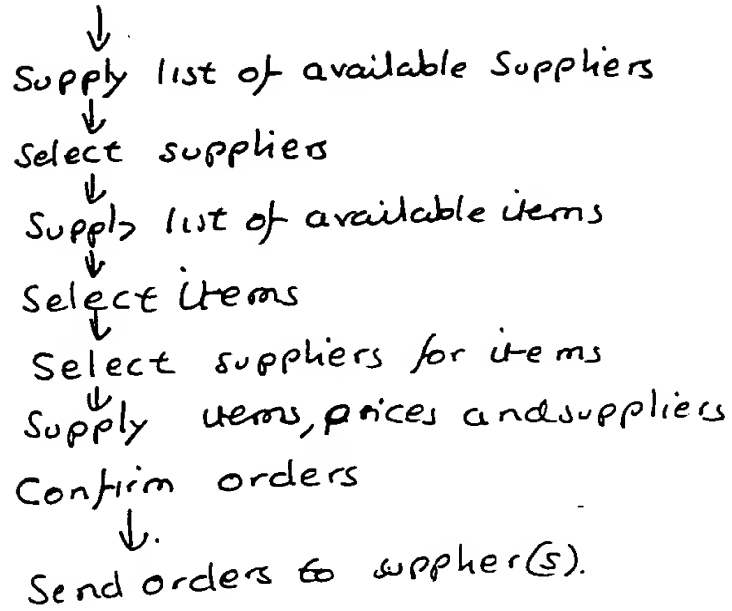
10 Chrysiliou Moore Martin

Figure 1

Provide Purchaser IP
↓

Supply list of available Suppliers
↓

Select supplier
↓

Supply list of available items
↓

Select items
↓

Select suppliers for items
↓

Supply items, prices and suppliers

Confirm orders
↓

Send orders to supplier(s).

Figure 2.

Ye̲w Go Favorite Help

Forward | Stop | Refresh | Home | Search | Favorites | History | Channels | Fullscreen | Mail | Print

Links E Best of the Address E http://spn.com.au/live/t13/frames13.nsf

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← 20

Product Information:

Category:	Liquor	Sub Category:	Bourbon
Description:	Jack Daniels	Generic Title:	
Unit Size:	700	Brand:	
Order Unit:	12/Case	Unit Measurement:	ml

Product Code:

← 24

Product Code	
SPHC:	1234

Product Pricing:

	Price A	Price B	Price C
SPHC Unit:	32.23	30.00	32.23
SPHC Case:	375.47	360.00	350.00

[Update]

↑ 26   ↑ 28   ↑ 30.

internet zone

Fig 3

File Edit View Go Favorites Help

Back | Forward | Stop | Refresh | Home | Search | Favorites | History | Channels | Fullscreen | Mail | Print

Links E Best of the Address E http://spn.com.au/live/t12/frames12.nsf

Customers
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View Archived Orders
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30 →

Profile:

Name:	Paterсyal Paramatta
Street Address:	30 Phillip Street
City / Suburb:	Paramatta
State:	NSW
Post Code:	2150
Office Telephone No.:	02 6689 3333
Office Facsimile No.:	02 6689 3653
Delivery Instructions:	Enter Via Phillip Lane

Customer Number:

42

SPHC:	

Customer Profile:

32 →
34 →
36 →
38 →
40 →

Supply This Customer:	⦿ Yes ○ No
Pricing Structure:	⦿ A ○ B ○ C
Minimum Order:	
Delivery Charge:	0
COD:	○ Yes ○ No

Update Profile

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Figure 4

Figure 5

Dry Foods
Competitive Order
A/W
Chippy's
John Lewis
P.M. Smith

Liquor
Competitive Order
Harbottle
Carlton Special
Carlton United
Teohers
Combined Beer Order

Guest Supplies
Concept

Stationery
OfficeForce Stationery
OfficeForce Paper

Consumables
Martins

Administration
List Maintenance
My Profile
View Orders
View Archived Orders
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Demo Purchaser Account - Wednesday, 14 April 1999

Delivery Day: [Next Delivery Run]

Product Description	Unit Qty	Case Qty
APERITIFS AND BITTERS		
Angostura Bitters 200 ml 24/Case	1	1
Campari 750 ml 12/case	1	1
Cinzano Dry 1000 ml 12/case	1	1
Cinzano Rosso 1000 ml 12/case	1	1
Dubonnett 750 ml 12/case	1	1
Pernod 700 ml 12/case	1	1
Pimms No 1 750 ml 12/case	1	1
BOURBON	1	1
Beams Choice 700 ml 12/Case		
555247 Jack Daniels 700 ml 12/Case	1	1
Jack Daniels Gentleman Jack 750 ml 12/Case	1	1
Jack Daniels Single Barrel 700 ml 6/Case	1	1
Jim Beam 700 ml 12/Case	1	1

Document Done

Figure 6.

Figure 7